

**Arlington Transit Advisory Committee
Accessibility Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2017
5:00 p.m.
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Azalea Conference Room**

Attendees:

Members: Alexa Mavroidis, William Staderman, Herschel Kanter

Staff: Steve Yaffe, Andy Wexler

Contractors: Tom Furlong, Tyrone Barksdale, Sabrina Brown, Mary Blyther

Public: RaeCarole Tekeste

Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and discussed several recent observations about STAR and ART service:

- On two recent occasions, sedans have been sent to Mr. Staderman for return trips, which has resulted in lengthy delays as he waited for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.
- Ms. Mavroidis noted that ART 41 tends to overshoot the stop on 7th St. S. at S. Florida St.
- Ms. Mavroidis noted that East Falls Church Metro needs a second curb-cut for people with disabilities

The Subcommittee also asked whether ART 53W could serve the Metrobus 2A stop on eastbound Washington Blvd at N. Longfellow St.

Approval of Minutes

The March minutes were approved unanimously.

ART Discussion Topics

- **ART 45 Customer Comment** Recently a customer with a disability tried to wave down the ART 45 at the ART 42/77 stop on northbound Washington Blvd at N. Pershing Dr., and the bus did not stop for her. The customer was upset because she felt the bus operator was rude. ART 45 does not serve that stop because it cannot safely turn right from Washington to Pershing from the curb. The Subcommittee recommended educating the customer as to where the ART 45 stops,

and explain why it cannot stop at that stop, rather than making an unscheduled stop in an unsafe location.

- **Bus Equipment – Press Tape vs. Pull Cord**

The County is preparing to order thirteen new 40-foot ART buses, and is considering what type of equipment to use for stop requests. The current fleet of heavy-duty ART buses uses yellow press tape, and ART's smaller Arboc buses have red push buttons, but Metrobus and other regional transit providers use pull cords. Staff circulated a Twitter poll on the Arlington Transit website; of the 462 votes, 18% supported press tape and 82% supported pull cords. The Subcommittee discussed the pros and cons of each system. It was noted that some people with disabilities cannot reach the pull cords and lack the dexterity or force to push the relatively thin press tape. Some members felt that the press tape is too narrow. The red buttons on the Arbocs are the easiest for wheelchair-users to push – could be viable in combination with the pull-cords.

- **US Access Board Webinar: Accessibility Guidelines for Non-Rail Vehicles**

Jason Davis of the Transit Bureau attended and provided a written summary. The highlights were described in an attachment and discussed briefly.

STAR Discussion Topics

- **TTY Capability at Shirlington Commuter Store**

The Shirlington Commuter Store TTY machine no longer works. It was used only for outgoing calls by hearing customers, not for incoming calls from the hearing-impaired. STAR customers have several other ways to contact the STAR Call Center, including Virginia Relay 711, a web site (www.starontheweb.us), and text messaging to the Call Center's cellphone. Therefore, the County believes that replacing the TTY is not necessary. The Subcommittee agreed and discussed other options for improving communications for the hearing-impaired, including videophones and improving text messaging to achieve 508-compliance.

- **STAR Transportation Vendor Performance**

Staff met with both transportation vendors earlier in the week to discuss necessary procedures to improve performance and accuracy. In particular, drivers are expected to call out to riders to ensure that they are picking up the correct passenger, examine their MetroAccess ID, and collect the fare in advance. If the person entering the cab is not the correct STAR rider, the driver should politely inform them that this is not their assigned ride.

- **Review of the 2011 STAR Rider Survey Summary**

The Subcommittee suggested that staff convey the summary to Mr. Keyser in response to the concerns he expressed in March. Data from 2011 is too old to be relevant anymore, so posting it online does not make sense. A new survey is necessary, but should be conducted only after the new Call Center technology has

been procured and implemented. Funding for a new survey should be sought for the FY19 budget.

Other Business

- Mr. Staderman asked when the pedestrian access question from last month's meeting will be investigated. Mr. Wexler is trying to arrange a meeting with Ms. Melick before asking the lead pedestrian facilities planner for his input.
- Ms. Mavroidis asked whether an additional curb cut can be installed at East Falls Church Metro. Staff is asking WMATA to fund additional engineering work to the concept redesign plan previously reviewed by the full Transit Advisory Committee.
- Call Center RFP still has not been released. Staff is unsure of the timeline but hopeful that technology improvements can still be in place this fall.

Adjournment

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, May 18, 2017 – Birch Conference Room